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READING SKILLS
Children who are taught to read in programs that use literature, instead of the basal readers used by most schools, tend to write better, to develop more higher-order skills, and to become lifelong readers, according to some researchers.

See Page 11.

MAGNET SCHOOLS
In the first national assessment of magnet schools, a new study finds that they are effective both as educational innovations and in school-desegregation efforts—and they are growing in number without the incentive of federal support.

See Page 5.

THE HUMANITIES
The back-to-basics movement has had a negative effect on the humanities, according to a new survey, and despite the current effort to upgrade education, little is being done to strengthen or promote instruction in those fields, officials report.

See Page 5.

EDUCATION WEEK

American Education's Newspaper of Record Volume III, Number 14 · December 14, 1983

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Forum Said Successful in Rallying Support for Change

By Thomas Toch

INDIANAPOLIS—By many accounts heard here, Education Secretary Terrel H. Bell's wish for the national forum on excellence in education last week was fulfilled. In drawing national attention to education, participants said, it is likely to do much to make the topic a key political issue between now and the November elections.

Elected officials at every level who ignore the topic of education reform in the months ahead will do so at their political peril, according to many of the 2,500 educators and politicians here.

"Every candidate in the primaries and general elections is going to have to have a program to improve education," said Gov. Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey, one of several speakers at the forum to advocate reforms in the public-school teaching profession.

The political pressure building for substantive education reforms is suggested by recent polls, he and others noted. "We're finding that if you are an elected official, and you don't attend to education, you will be in trouble politically," said Geoffrey D. Garin, senior vice president of Peter Hart Research Associates, a Washington-based firm that is doing the polling work for the Mondale Presidential campaign. "This is true nationwide and filters all the way down to mayoral races."

He added that "the public wants accountability in education. It's not like the 1960's, when the feeling was that more money was the answer. Taxpayers want more accountability of teachers and students."

Gov. Kean noted in an interview that recent polls done for him in his state offer "one very, very strong message: If policymakers ask for more money for education, it better be accompanied by proposals for measurable change. But if there are [such proposals], there is overwhelming support for increased spending for education."

Mr. Garin also noted that some polls suggest the Republican Party in recent months has "neutralized" the political advantage

Continued on Page 14

Oklahoma Progress Jeopardized by Massive Revenue Shortfall

By Charlie Euchner

Faced with a $155-million budget deficit and legislative resistance to higher taxes, Gov. George P. Nigh of Oklahoma has ordered state agencies to cut their budgets, beginning with a 26-percent reduction this month.

Education, which accounts for almost 70 percent of the state's $1.689-billion appropriations budget, will be hit hardest.

The Governor's action came after the General Assembly adjourned a special session late last month without approving his proposed tax increase.

The deficit projected for this year and a slightly smaller deficit seen for next year have already affected the state's ability to pay for its ambitious program of salary improvements for teachers and could result in the layoff of 5,000 of the state's 40,000 teachers, according to one budget expert.

AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE

An occasional series on the progress of the school-reform movement.

"We're fooling ourselves if we think we can get through this without some major layoffs," said Douglas J. Eneboldsen, director of the fiscal division of the state House of Representatives.

But Beverly Borthick, a fiscal analyst for the House, said districts can cut spending in ways other than teacher layoffs—by scaling down programs such as after-school athletics, for example, or consolidating school districts, reducing unnecessary administrative positions, and cutting transportation services. Eventually, however, she conceded, the districts will be forced to lay off teachers unless the state increases taxes.

The state had no trouble meeting its monthly bills this year until last month. But then the state brought in $7 million less than was appropriated for November, and projected that December's revenues would fall short of expectations by $34 million. The Office of State Finance is project-

Continued on Page 17

Tax Hikes, Brighter Business Climate a Boon to Schools in Some States

By Cindy Currence

Although some states, like Oklahoma, are struggling with multimillion deficits, others, after several years of financial hardship, are beginning to see some relief. And some are even anticipating budget surpluses.

The improving fiscal situation, according to budget analysts, is largely due to the combination of tax increases adopted by legislatures and voters in the last year and greater-than-expected economic growth in recent months.

The success of some of those tax initiatives, according to some state officials, can be attributed to growing public concern about education.

A survey of states by the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 26 states in a recent 12-month period had raised sales or personal-income taxes, or both; 15 states had increased their business-income taxes; 18 had increased their cigarette taxes; 14 had upped their levies on alcoholic beverages; and 19 had raised their taxes on motor fuel.

Officials in some states said last week that there was less difficulty in passing such tax increases when education programs clearly were the beneficiaries.

"Nobody likes to have their taxes increased," said David Fields, a spokesman for Gov. James R. Thompson of Illinois, but when the state instituted a temporary 1-percent increase in personal income taxes last spring, "we didn't hear much complaining about it," Mr. Fields said.

Education played a major role in convincing state legislators and their constituents that a tax increase was needed, Mr. Fields said. Because Illinois has not had a tax increase in 14 years, the legislature has cut spending in order to balance the budget.

"After a certain point, you start cutting into the muscle of major programs like education and I think most people realized that [additional] cuts would have been devastating," he said.

In addition to the temporary personal-income-tax increase, the Illinois legislature also adopted a 1-percent permanent increase in the state sales tax this year.

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Concerns Raised Over Voc.-Ed. In Reform Era

Educators Fear Erosion Of Programs, Interest

By Susan G. Foster

ANAHEIM, CALIF.—Vocational educators say they are worried that the pressures for more academic courses generated by recent national reports on improving education will diminish the numbers of vocational-education programs and students.

Although many state and local administrators attending the annual convention of the American Vocational Association here agreed that it is too soon to gauge how many programs or students have been lost in the states that have already increased academic standards for graduation, they warned that the reforms could lead to dramatic changes in the delivery of vocational-education services within the next few years.

"The long-term consequences are likely to force earlier choices, less flexibility, and more specialized [vocational] institutions," said Robert E. Taylor, director of the federally supported National Center for Research in Vocational Education at The Ohio State University.

Mr. Taylor said the U. S. Education Department has agreed, through its contract with the center, to pay for a national study to address what he calls "the unfinished agenda" of the various reports on education. A panel of experts from within and outside the vocational field, he explained, will examine the role of vocational education in the high school and offer recommendations for improvement.

The decision to convene the study panel was prompted in part by the disappointment of many vocational educators' with the virtual omission of vocational education from the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

'Narrow Perceptions'

Darrel Parks, director of vocational education for the Ohio Department of Education, criticized the excellence commission's report and other national studies for their "biased" and "narrow perceptions." None of the task forces or commissions, he said, considered vocational education important enough to study, nor did any of them include representatives from the vocational-education community.

But, Mr. Parks said, it would be "a major

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THE WEEK

A SUMMARY OF NEWS AND EVENTS

IN SUMMARY

School Reform in Arizona
A committee is recommending increased graduation requirements, a longer school year, and better teaching. **Story on Page 6.**

'Shortchanging' Education in Illinois
The chairman of the state board of education warns that the lack of funding will erode the quality of the state's schools. **Story on Page 7.**

Tracking in California
A study of comprehensive high schools concludes that they may provide the best education only to the best students. **Story on Page 8.**

A Call for a 'Positive' Attitude
In a major policy statement, the Vatican, for the first time, has endorsed the teaching of sex education in schools. **Story on Page 8.**

A Vote for Merit Pay
Nearly 80 percent of superintendents reponding to a survey favor merit pay but see problems with evaluation. **Story on Page 9.**

Learning To Write
A study finds that some methods of teaching writing are much more effective than others, including a popular one. **Story on Page 10.**

A Question of Related Services
The U. S. Supreme Court will rule on how far school districts must go in providing medical services for the handicapped. **Story on Page 13.**

A Report Card for the President
An American Enterprise Institute report on education says the Administration has lost its mandate for change. **Story on Page 13.**

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FEDERAL

House Democrats Accuse Reagan of Bias Against Poor

The Reagan Administration has "substantially" reduced assistance to minority and poor children, the Democrats on a House committee charged last week.

The House Government Operations Committee's accusation was contained in a report on the Chapter 1 program for disadvantaged children and the Chapter 2 block-grants program. The report was prepared by its Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources.

The subcommittee's investigation "reveals that block grants have reversed 18 years of federal educational civil-rights policies that have been endorsed by every President, regardless of party, since 1965," said Representative Ted Weiss, Democrat of New York and the panel's chairman.

The Emergency School Aid Act, the largest program folded into the block grants, was intended to help minority children by aiding school districts undergoing desegregation, Representative Weiss noted. "But in every case where the Education Department was authorized to guarantee that federal [block-grant] funds be spent on needy students, the department has shirked its responsibility," he said.

The report was endorsed only by the panel's Democratic members. In a dissenting opinion, its Republican members said: "Frankly, we believe the report reflects an unabashed bias in favor of federal influence over and tight control of our nation's education system."

Rights Commission Agreement Unravels

An agreement between the Congress and the White House over the fate of the new U. S. Commission on Civil Rights appeared to unravel last week with the announcement that all three Presidential nominees to the old panel will be granted seats on the new body.

Early in the week, President Reagan surprised civil-rights leaders and members of the Congress by refusing to appoint the old commission's vice-chairman, Mary L. Smith, to the new panel. Instead, Mr. Reagan named a Laredo, Tex., high-school teacher, Esther Gonzalez-Arroyo Buckley, to the panel.

As expected, Mr. Reagan also appointed Morris B. Abram, John H. Bunzel, and Clarence H. Pendleton Jr. to the new commission.

A day later, House Minority Leader Robert H. Michel of Illinois bypassed an incumbent commissioner, Jill Ruckelshaus, and designated Robert Destro, one of the President's original three nominees, to serve on the commission.

Under the agreement reached last month, the commission's membership was expanded from six to eight, with four members appointed by the President, two by the Speaker of the House, and two by the president pro tem of the Senate. The Congressional appointments were to be made upon the recommendations of the House and Senate majority and minority leaders.

Democratic Congressional leaders said last week that it had been "understood" that Ms. Smith would be one of Mr. Reagan's appointees and Ms. Ruckelshaus one of Mr. Michel's appointees.

NATIONAL

Int'l Service Union Seeks Regulations On Asbestos Control

The Service Employees International Union has filed a rule-making petition with the Environmental Protection Agency intended to force the agency to establish rules on the levels of hazard and on removal requirements for asbestos in schools.

Earlier this year, the union conducted a survey of asbestos in the schools, which estimated that about 10 percent of all schools have hazardous asbestos. The union's members include 90,000 school employees.

At that time, the union accused the federal government of responding sluggishly to a potential hazard. There is no federal requirement that asbestos be removed from schools.

The petition filed last week, however, could establish such a requirement. The union has asked the agency to establish rules that would create standards to gauge whether a hazard exists, how it should be cleaned up, and how workers should be protected while cleaning it up.

The agency has 90 days to respond to the petition, after which the union may seek relief in the federal courts. Union officials have said that they will do so if the E.P.A. fails to act on its petition.

STATES

Plaintiffs in N.J. Case Appeal Judge's Dismissal of Suit

The plaintiffs in New Jersey's new school-finance case, which was originally scheduled to go to trial this month, have appealed a trial judge's dismissal of their suit. Chancery Judge Virginia Long of Mercer County dismissed the complaint on Nov. 15 on grounds that the plaintiffs had failed to exhaust administrative remedies.

The suit, *Abbott* v. *Burke*, contends that the changes made in the state's school-finance system in response to the state supreme court's 1973 order in a successful challenge, *Robinson* v. *Cahill*, have failed to provide adequate or equal fiscal resources for urban districts.

The plaintiffs, a group of schoolchildren from four urban districts, will ask the state supreme court to hear the case directly, bypassing the intermediate appellate level.

In the meantime, according to the lawyer representing the state officials who are defendants in the case, Judge Long's order will set into motion an administrative proceeding to investigate the plaintiffs' claims.

"First, you have to look at the education being provided in those districts and determine whether it is adequate," said Steven Wallach, a deputy state attorney general.

"If not, you have to look at why; it may or may not be financial. Several of these districts are running surpluses. The commissioner has very broad and extensive powers to remedy any deficiencies he finds in those districts," he added.

Marilyn J. Morheuser of the Education Law Center Inc. in Newark, lead attorney for the plaintiffs, said Judge Long's order was without precedent in school-finance litigation. The state supreme court should act quickly, she argued, because the statistical data making up the evidence change from year to year and would have to be updated—a process that is both costly and time-consuming.

But even on the swiftest possible schedule, observers expect it will be at least two months before the case is tried, if at all.

Michigan Sex-Equity Official Develops Program for Districts

An official in the Michigan Education Department has developed a model program to increase the number of women in educational administration by raising awareness in school districts.

Noting that the number of women superintendents and secondary-school principals has declined in Michigan since the beginning of the century, Jo Jacobs, coordinator of the office for sex equity, has tried to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Tax Hikes, Better Economy Aid Schools

Continued from Page 1

Michigan increased spending for elementary and secondary education by some 30 percent for this year—thanks in large part to the income-tax increase pushed through the legislature by its Governor.

"Education was an important consideration," said Thomas Scott, deputy press secretary to Gov. James J. Blanchard. "We stopped the trend of disinvestment in education. Education is a fundamental building block of the state's economy. That's why the Governor was able to pull it off."

In Arkansas, the linkage between tax increases and education is even stronger. Last session, the legislature passed a 1-percent increase in the sales tax to be used solely for school improvement.

"The Governor would never have requested the increase if we had not had this need in education," said Kay Gaines, assistant press secretary for Gov. Bill Clinton.

In Florida, tax increases tied to education were also approved by the legislature, according to a spokesman for Gov. Robert Graham. "Without the mission of improving the schools, it would be awfully hard to see how [an increase] would pass," Patrick Riordan said. He also noted that recent national reports on educational reform were very helpful in getting the legislation through.

Governors and other state officials at a meeting late last month of the National Task Force on Education for Economic Growth in Wilmington, Del., agreed that education reform has helped to convince the public to support higher taxes.

Gov. Mark White of Texas said he has supported higher taxes since taking office this year because of the need to improve public education in the state. Govs. Charles S. Robb of Virginia, Richard W. Riley of South Carolina, James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina, and Pierre S. du Pont 4th of Delaware all agreed that tax increases could be sold on the basis of the need to upgrade education.

Resistance Noted

Although education has been useful in "selling" tax increases to legislators and voters, there are pockets of resistance, officials pointed out.

The adoption of tax initiatives in Michigan has ended the careers of two legislators and has threatened to end the careers of two more.

In unprecedented moves last month, voters recalled State Sens. Philip O. Mastin Jr. and David Serotkin, both Democrats, for voting in favor of the temporary 38-percent income tax increase.

Citizens groups already have presented petitions to oust two more legislators to the election boards of two other counties, Mr. Scott said, and the groups have said they will attempt to unseat other legislators who supported the tax increase.

Missouri's Gov. Christopher S. Bond is waiting to see how the legislature will act on his proposal for a 10-percent increase in state income taxes, much of it needed to finance desegregation of St. Louis schools. *(See Education Week, Nov. 2, 1983.)*

The state legislature is debating various proposals—the Governor's $157-million package, a House tax plan that would raise $335 million annually, and a Senate bill that is a compromise between the Governor's package and the House plan.

Unless a tax increase is passed this week, Governor Bond has said $63 million must be cut from the state's education, health, and agricultural programs. Other states are experiencing opposition to increases from a variety of citizens' groups. In Ohio, groups opposing recent tax increases were very active in campaigning for anti-tax measures that were defeated in state elections last month.

Florida's Governor Graham recently appointed a special commission to study the impact of the state's new unitary tax system that allows the state to apply its corporate tax to the foreign and out-of-state profits of businesses. Businessmen are bitterly opposed to the tax, a spokesman for the Governor said, and it is also a source of dispute between Governor Graham and Lt. Gov. Wayne Mixson. Mr. Mixson publicly called for repeal of the tax this fall while the Governor was out of the country.

Additional Proposals

In the next two years, officials at the National Conference of State Legislatures are expecting even more proposals for increased taxes based on the need to improve educational programs.

Although pressure for educational reform paved the way for tax increases in several states, Steven D. Gold, a finance expert at the N.C.S.L., attributes most of the tax increases in 1983 to economic factors.

It was the state deficits caused by the economic recession, he said, that finally forced many states to increase taxes as a means of offsetting their losses. (A report from the National Governor's Association released last winter revealed that 37 of 41 states surveyed had adopted austerity measures in 1982. Fifteen states reported laying off workers as well as passing temporary revenue-raising measures.)

Another factor, Mr. Gold said, is the tax-revolt movement. "States went overboard in cutting," and then tax increases were necessary to bring services back up to adequate levels.

Because many states already were on the way to establishing biennial budgets last April when the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its report, Mr. Gold pointed out that most legislatures barely got around to discussing some of the major issues it raised before their 1983 sessions ended.

"It's one thing to talk," he said, "it's another thing to have action. In terms of the big bucks, most states did not come through."

Increased emphasis on educational reform will be even more noticeable during the next two years, Mr. Gold predicts. "Numerous" states will increase taxes to fund 1984-85 education budgets, he said, basing his prediction on the results of a recent N.C.S.L. survey of state legislators on education committees. Forty-six legislators representing 36 states responded to the survey.

"Taxes and elementary and secondary education ranked one and two as the leading state budget issues during 1983," the report states. "Attention to school finance represents a dramatic shift from just a year ago, when less than one-fourth as many states mentioned funding local government—including the schools—as a top budget issue."

Charlie Euchner contributed to this report.

Court To Rule on Related Services

Continued from Page 13

ministration said Judge Alsop's decision would discourage compliance with the law and "reward self-proclaimed lawbreakers."

In *Lawrence County* v. *Lead-Deadwood School District No. 40-1*, (No. 83-240), the Justices have been asked to decide whether a South Dakota funding statute is unconstitutional because it is in conflict with a federal law that provides payments to local government units in lieu of property taxes on federal lands.

Under the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Act of 1976, when the federal government acquires large amounts of property—for example, for additions to the National Park System—it must compensate local governments for property taxes lost as a result of such acquisitions.

Lead-Deadwood school officials brought suit in state circuit court against the Lawrence County commissioners in February 1982 in order to force them to disburse funds received under the federal law to local schools. The school district would have received 60 percent of those funds under a South Dakota law that directs that all federal payments in lieu of taxes be distributed in the same manner as state taxes.

The county officials countersued, claiming that the federal law states that funds received under the act could be used for any local government purpose. Under the Sixth Amendment's "Supremacy Clause," they argued, federal laws supersede state laws whenever the two conflict.

The state trial court ruled in favor of the county commissioners' position in September 1982, but that decision was reversed by the South Dakota Supreme Court a month later. Last week, the Justices invited the Reagan Administration to file a brief outlining its position in the case.

In other action last week, the Court, without comment, upheld a federal appeals court's decision that at-large elections for the school board in Mobile County, Ala., violated the civil rights of black residents.

This fall, the county, under court order, agreed to begin electing members to its five-member board under a ward system that ensures black representation. The Justice Department filed a brief opposing the county's challenge of the appeals court's decision in the case, *Board of School Commissioners* v. *Brown* (No. 83-334).

The Court last week also rejected a Texas school district's claim that a former teacher and coach filed his race-discrimination claim against it too late. In *Big Spring Independent School District* v. *Griffin*, (No. 83-378), the Court upheld a federal appeals court's ruling that James Griffin's claims of race discrimination under the Fourteenth Amendment were still alive, even though he filed his suit more than two years after being notified by the school district that his contract was not renewed. Under Texas law, teachers must file a grievance in nonrenewal cases within two years of their dismissal. The case will go back for trial in the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas.

DATABANK

Dropout Rates of High-School Students

Approximately 14 percent of sophomores in U. S. high schools in 1980 dropped out during or after their sophomore year and before completing graduation requirements, according to new data drawn from the National Center for Education Statistics' study, "High School and Beyond." The statistics were drawn from a base-year survey of 30,000 sophomores and 28,000 seniors in a national, representative sample of 1,015 schools. By the spring of 1982, data from a subsample of students re-surveyed indicate, over 27 percent of the dropouts were unemployed or dissatisfied with their work and searching for other jobs. Most of those in full- or part-time positions held jobs requiring low skills, such as factory and other manual labor. And most dropouts, according to the report, said they regretted their decision to leave school early.

The survey also found that male sophomores were more likely than female sophomores to drop out (15 percent versus 13 percent), and that American Indians and Alaskan Natives had the highest dropout rate of any racial/ethnic group—over 29 percent. Hispanics and blacks followed with 18 percent and 17 percent, respectively; the dropout rate for whites was 12 percent; and only 3 percent of Asian Americans left school prematurely.

The tables below list students' reasons for leaving school and the jobs they held after dropping out, based on the subgroup survey of 1,188 males and 1,101 females.

Reasons 1980 Sophomore Dropouts Reported For Leaving High School Before Graduation, by Sex

Reasons[1]	Male (percent)	Female (percent)
School-related:		
Was expelled or suspended	13.0	5.3
Had poor grades	35.9	29.7
School was not for me	34.8	31.1
School grounds too dangerous	2.7	1.7
Didn't get into desired program	7.5	4.5
Couldn't get along with teachers	20.6	9.5
Family-related:		
Was married or planned to marry	6.9	30.7
Was pregnant	NA	23.4
Had to support family	13.6	8.3
Peer-related:		
Friends were dropping out	6.6	2.4
Couldn't get along with students	5.4	5.9
Health-related:		
Illness or disability	4.6	6.5
Other:		
Was offered job and chose to work	26.9	10.7
Wanted to enter military	7.2	0.8
Moved too far from school	2.2	5.3
Wanted to travel	7.0	6.5

[1] Students might report more than one reason.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics.

Work That 1980 Sophomore High-School Dropouts Did On Their Most Recent Job, by Sex[1]

Kind of Work[2]	Male (percentage distribution)	Female (percentage distribution)
Total	100.0	100.0
Lawn work, odd jobs	6.0	2.9
Waiter, waitress	14.1	23.0
Babysitting or child care	0.1	14.0
Farm work	8.7	1.5
Factory work	10.9	8.0
Skilled trade	13.9	2.8
Other manual labor	12.1	8.1
Store clerk or salesman	5.9	15.2
Office or clerical work	1.2	10.2
Hospital or health-related work	0.9	2.5
Gas station, car wash attendant	8.4	1.9
Delivery jobs	1.7	0.4
Military	5.8	2.4
Other jobs	10.4	7.2

[1] Columns may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

[2] Respondents were asked to choose the job that paid the most per week if they had more than one kind of work.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics.